

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of making paper comprising:

mixing a pulp slurry and a polymer emulsion comprising a cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A) and polymer particles (B) having an average particle diameter of 0.2 to 19.4 μm and comprising at least vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprising 94.66 wt. % to 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units,

wherein the polymer particles (B) are obtained by an emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method in the presence of said cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A) to form a mixture, such that the proportion of (A) is from 10 to 315 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the polymer particles (B); wherein the polymer emulsion has a solid content of 7.9 to 39 % by weight and wherein the glass transition temperature (TG) of (B) is from 32°C to 59°C;

filtering said mixture on a wire mesh to drain water out to form a paper layer, [[and]]

wherein said polymer emulsion is added to said pulp slurry at the time of papermaking,
and

wherein the emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method is carried out in the presence of a surfactant.

2. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) A pulp sheet made by the method according to claim 1.

8. **(Currently amended)** ~~[[The]]~~ A pulp sheet made by the method according to claim ~~[[7]]~~ 1, wherein the polymer emulsion ~~of claim 1~~ is present in an amount of 0.05 to 20 parts by weight in terms of solid content to 100 parts by weight of the pulp sheet.

9. **(Currently amended)** A method of making paper comprising:
mixing a pulp slurry and a polymer emulsion comprising a cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A) having a viscosity of 20 mPa·s or more in a 7 wt. % aqueous solution as determined at 50°C with a Brookfield viscometer and Rotor No. 2 at 60 rpm, and polymer particles (B) having an average particle diameter of 0.2 to 19.4 µm and having a glass transition temperature (TG) of 32°C to 59°C having vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprising 94.66 wt. % to 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units,

wherein the polymer particles (B) are obtained by an emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method in the presence of said cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A), such that the proportion of (A) is from 10 to 315 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the polymer particles (B); and wherein the polymer emulsion has a solid content of 7.9 to 39 % by weight; ~~[[and]]~~

filtering said mixture on a wire mesh to drain water out to form a paper layer,

wherein said polymer emulsion is added to said pulp slurry at the time of papermaking,
and

wherein the emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method is carried out in the presence of a surfactant.

10. **(Currently amended)** A method of improving stiffness of paper comprising:

bringing pulp into contact with a polymer emulsion comprising a cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A) and polymer particles (B) having an average particle diameter of 0.2 to 19.4 μm and comprising at least vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprising 94.66 wt. % to 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units,

wherein the polymer particles (B) are obtained by an emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method in the presence of said cationic starch having a nitrogen content (N%) of 0.2 to 0.8 percent (A), such that the proportion of (A) is from 10 to 315 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the polymer particles (B); wherein the polymer emulsion has a solid content of 7.9 to 39 % by weight; and wherein the glass transition temperature (TG) of (B) is from 32°C to 59°C; ~~[[and]]~~

wherein said pulp is contacted with said polymer emulsion at the time of papermaking,
and

wherein the emulsion polymerization method, suspension polymerization method or dispersion polymerization method is carried out in the presence of a surfactant.

11. – 12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the vinyl monomer-derived structural unit comprises 2.43 wt. % or less of a polymerizable unsaturated group – containing anionic monomer.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the vinyl monomer-derived structural unit comprises 2.78 wt. % or less of a nonionic hydrophilic group – containing monomer.

15 - 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously presented) A method of making paper according to claim 1, wherein the vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprise 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units.

22. (Previously presented) A method of making paper according to claim 9, wherein the vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprise 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units.

23. (Previously presented) A method of making paper according to claim 10, wherein the vinyl monomer-derived structural units comprise 100 wt. % of vinyl acetate units.

24. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein an aqueous solution of the cationic starch (A) has a viscosity of 40 to 10,000 mPa·s at a concentration of 7 wt.% at 50°C.